

ADDRESS

of HON. ROLAND S. MORRIS delivered at the CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY of

ST. STEPHEN'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL

CHURCH

(Monday evening, February 26th, 1923.)

"It was found when the census of 1820 came to be taken that the total population of the United States had increased from 7,206,000 to 9,650,000 within the decade. Twenty thousand immigrants had come in at the ports the year Mr. Monroe became President (1817). It was not merely a growth along the old lines and at the old seats of population. The restless, increasing, adventurous movement of the nation made a deeper impression upon its life than did its mere growth. The boatman's song on the long western rivers; the crack of the teamster's whip in the mountain passes; the stroke of the woodman's axe ringing out in the stillness of the forest; the sharp report of the rifle of the huntsman, pioneer and scout on the fast advancing frontier filled the air as if with the very voices of change and were answered by events quick with the fulfillment of prophesy."

Thus, in a style which cannot be mistaken, Woodrow Wilson

described the period in the closing years of President Monroe's Administration which saw the beginnings of the expanding movement and which found expression later in the thrilling days of the Jacksonian triumphs. The old order in all departments of life - political, social and religious - was giving place to a new spirit. This was not only true within the borders of the United States, but was in part a reflection of the general movement throughout the civilized world. The Victorian Age, with all its spiritual, intellectual and material achievements, was being born. Thought was just beginning to free itself from the conventions of the two previous centuries.

In the year 1823 Charles Darwin, a boy of fourteen, was arranging his first crude collection of natural specimen at Shrewsbury School. In the same year John Henry Newman had taken his place as a Fellow of Oriel. Between 1823 and 1827 Hegel's activity reached its maximum. His "AEsthetics"; "Philosophy of Religion"; "Philosophy of History" and "History of Philosophy" were the products of the lectures he was then delivering before enthusiastic students at the University of Berlin. This new spirit touched even the conventional life of the Anglican Church in the United States. Associated as the Anglican establishment had been with the British cause during the period of the Revolution, it but slowly recovered its place of influence during the early days of our national life. It is largely owing to the labors and the vision of Bishop White, of this Diocese, that it recovered at all. Before the Oxford Movement in 1833 which so completely revolutionized the thought of the Established Church

in England, a small group of American Episcopalians had caught something of the spirit of the new age and were dreaming of a Church in America with a larger conception of its mission and a stronger discipline. The leader of this movement was Bishop Hobart, of New York, and among his most enthusiastic friends and followers was the Rev. James Montgomery, of Philadelphia. Dr. Montgomery, born in Philadelphia in 1787, of well-to-do and highly respected parents, had graduated at Princeton College in 1805 and after studying under Judge Hopkinson was admitted as a member of the Philadelphia Bar. He abandoned the practice of the law after several years and was ordained as a clergyman of the Episcopal Church on October 7, 1817. He had been brought up in the evangelical atmosphere, which is associated with old St. Paul's Church on Third street, but was dissatisfied with its narrow outlook and felt that greater emphasis should be placed on the traditions and discipline of the historic English Church as it might be applied to the new conditions in American life. In a letter dated January 1, 1825, he details for the benefit of future generations the circumstances which led to the founding of St. Stephen's Church. "In the fall of 1821," he says, "having been Providentially visited with a lingering indisposition, I found considerable satisfaction in employing my thoughts on the consideration of the best manner of turning my feeble talents to advantage in the promotion of the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom. After some time the idea occurred that the meeting house formerly occupied by a Methodist Congregation, and standing on the site of St. Stephen's, and then vacant, might be

procured; in which case I was resolved as soon as my health should enable me to occupy it on the evenings of the Lord's Day. By the kind instrumentality of my friend, Mr. Bancker, the house was obtained from the wealthy owners, the Messrs. Kelly, who generously offered me the exclusive use of it. My first service in it was celebrated on the evening of January 20, 1822 . . . The services were continued with increasing interest until we were obliged to intermit them in consequence of the preparation for the inception of the new Church in the latter part of April 1822, and on the 28th day of May following, the cornerstone was laid, On the 27th of February 1823 the present magnificent edifice was consecrated to the solemn worship of Almighty God by the name of "St. Stephen's Church".

Dr. Montgomery had been elected Rector of the new Parish on March 5, 1823, but it was not until January 1, 1825, that the members of the first Vestry were able to write him "Your friends have now the happiness to see you the pastor of a numerous and affectionate Flock, dispensing the offices regularly in a temple unsurpassed in taste and elegance by any in the country," and thereupon tendered him the munificent salary of one thousand dollars a year. Thus in every sense Dr. James Montgomery was the founder of St. Stephen's Parish which we are proud to feel was the first expression in Philadelphia of a new and more liberal spirit in the religious life of the community. His friend and leader, Bishop Hobart, of New York, preached the consecration sermon which was subsequently published. It is interesting to note that a year later, in one of John Henry Newman's published

letters, there is a paragraph which reads: "Bishop Hobart, of New York, is in Oxford. I dined with him at the Provost's yesterday. He is an intelligent man and gave us a good deal of information on the affairs of the American Episcopal Church." We wonder whether he told the then young Oxford crusader who was subsequently so vitally to change the Anglican Church, something of this new movement which he inaugurated the year previous at St. Stephen's.

Three laymen were closely associated with Dr. Montgomery in this new venture -- Edward Shippen Burd, William Kirkham and Charles N. Bancker.

Mr. Burd, a member of the first Vestry, was at that time one of the richest men in Philadelphia and lived in the famous Burd Mansion, at the southwest corner of Ninth and Chestnut streets. His father had accumulated what was deemed to be in those days a vast fortune by wise real estate investments and Mr. Burd devoted his time to the conservation of the estate which he had inherited, to a generous hospitality in his beautiful home, and during the later years of his life to much travel abroad.

Mr. Bancker and Mr. Kirkham were men of very different interests. They were Philadelphia merchants of that old school. They possessed that fine sense of duty, rare spirit of fidelity and honor which was then an outstanding characteristic of the business life of Philadelphia.

Dr. Montgomery was a strong preacher. His sermons possessed much of the old evangelical fervor, but one finds in them a long discarded note -- a sense of the value of Christian

tradition and Christian discipline. His frail health, however, could not carry the strain of a growing Parish. On the last Sunday of the year 1833, he preached a sermon on the text "We spend our lives as a tale that is told". That was his last morning service and after a lingering illness he died on the 17th of March 1834.

The character of his "Christian Death" was the subject of much comment in the religious press of the day and many descriptions were written by zealous friends of his last hours which as we read them serve to emphasize the contrast of these days when we have substituted the medical and scientific surroundings for the "evangelical translations" of a century ago.

On October 15, 1834, the Vestry elected as Rector the Rev. Henry W. Ducachet, of Norfolk, Virginia, and thus began the longest rectorate in the history of the Church. Dr. Ducachet, of French ancestry, was educated in Charleston, South Carolina, and when called to St. Stephen's was Rector of the Episcopal Church at Norfolk, Virginia. He was very different in character from his predecessor. In order to understand the nature of his influence it is necessary to picture briefly the religious environment to which he came. The year 1834 marked the closing days of a vast political and social upheaval. The Jackson controversy with the Bank of the United States had reached its acute stage; financial conditions were unstable and depressing; the forward movement of the previous decade had been stayed. This financial distress was accompanied by a singular religious revival which swept over the country during the succeeding ten

years. It was characterized by an extreme self-searching spirit which placed the emphasis on individual salvation rather than spiritual values, and established extreme standards of conduct and an almost morbid self-examination. No questions of doctrine had yet arisen. Liberalism was not applied to thought but wholly to conduct. Men and women searched their lives, exaggerated their own faults, set their own rigid standards in conventional and sometimes absurd molds. One must go back to the evangelical movement in England in order to picture the tenor of the religious life as it developed during this period in America. It possessed great elements of strength. It produced fine men and women, but to us as we read of it now, it seems ungenerous and illiberal. A sick man whom Zackary Macaulay exhorted to repentance was bold enough to say that he could not fix on any particular sins. Quite sincerely that uncompromising evangelical writes, "I was at no loss, however, to remind him of numberless particular sins of the commission of which I myself had been a witness. I set them before him with all their aggravations." On another occasion, a young lady showed some very striking marks of a "vain mind". Whereupon this untiring censor "had some very serious conversation with herself and her father. The young lady did not altogether relish my plain but I am sure friendly expostulation". A few days later the damsel had realized that Mr. Macaulay spoke the words of truth and soberness and had by this time got rid of her "monstrous misshapen dress and reverted to the use of plain and simple attire and her lowly looks were, I hope, no fallacious indication of a humbled

mind." It was frankness to the point of censoriousness and a certain narrowness of view which except for its obvious sincerity would have been peculiarly repellant.

To such a spirit the new Rector of St. Stephen's, Dr. Ducachet, was an entire stranger. His character and training led him to interpret the religious life in a sympathetic, generous and tolerant spirit. He had a keen sense of humor, great social gifts, and a real love of life. Of rather full habit and florid complexion, with a genial smile, charming old world manner, he was a familiar figure for over thirty years in the streets of Philadelphia. He loved people and his sympathy for weakness, his tolerance of mistakes soon made him the valued counsellor of many families. Perhaps no man in his generation knew more of the sorrows and tragedies, the disappointments and the frustrations of the people among whom he lived. He formed warm friendships and particularly among those who in the language of the day were "worldly minded" and lacking in religious zeal. Thus in a period when conduct and not belief was the test he ranked as an extreme liberal who loved nature and beautiful things and music and the opera and the theatre and believed that enjoyment of life was not inconsistent with the Christian profession. The early days of his rectorate were hopeful ones. The mortgage of \$15,000 which bore heavily on the finances of the Church was reduced to \$8,500; the musical services were improved, the Rector's sermons were still new. But by 1841 financial difficulties accumulated and there is a rather pathetic letter spread upon the minutes of the corporation wherein Dr. Ducachet surrenders \$500. a year of his salary as his contribution to the dwindling finances. As one studies the record one reaches the conclusion that the seven years between

1841 and 1848 were years of discouragement and disillusion. Dr. Ducachet's personal influence increased. His friendships were strengthened; his associations with the community were deepened but the Parish wearied a little of his somewhat prosy sermons and longed perhaps for something of the zeal and enthusiasm which could be found at the overflowing revival meetings in the neighborhood. But in 1848 Edward Shippen Burd died. He and his wife in the intervals between their travels had formed a deep attachment for Dr. Ducachet and his wife and had found the kindly Doctor not only a pleasant companion but a real comforter in the series of tragedies which overtook their household. As though haunted by some strange fatality one after another of their beautiful children died in early maturity leaving them lonely and desolate in the great house. Without the presence and the sympathy of Dr. Ducachet in those dark days they could hardly have borne the burden of their sorrow. Thus it was an excited group of discouraged Vestrymen who met at Dr. Ducachet's residence on Girard street on the evening of September 20, 1848, to receive a communication from the great lawyer, Eli K. Price, asking the Vestry to be present at the reading of Edward Shippen Burd's will. Nor were their expectations disappointed. A generous provision for the erection of a memorial to the children he had loved; a legacy to Dr. Ducachet in trust for the benefit of the Parish; an expression of the obligation which he owed to the Parish and its Rector were indeed cheering. Unselfish sympathy had brought to the Parish which

Dr. Ducachet loved renewed life and interest. Mrs. Burd, living alone in the old home, followed the lead of her husband and between the Spring of 1850 and the Easter season of 1860 when she died, all her thought and interest were centred in wisely using her money for St. Stephen's Parish and its beloved Rector's work. She paid all the floating debts. She provided for an increase in the Rector's salary. She paid off the balance of the mortgage. She put in the stained glass windows. She founded the parochial school. She completed the chancel improvements. She contributed the chime of bells. She recarpeted the interior and finally presented to the Parish the beautiful baptismal font which in its day was so greatly admired. Mr. William Kirkham's years of worry as Accounting Warden were ended.

On April 6, 1860, Mrs. Burd died and it was found by the terms of her will her residuary estate were left to the Rector, Churchwardens and Vestrymen of St. Stephen's Church for the establishment of an orphan asylum for girls. In this foundation Mrs. Burd had been guided by a desire to appropriate her wealth to the rearing of children as a fitting memorial to her own lost ones. Dr. Ducachet thus realized one of the dreams of his life and he gave to the now work and its responsibilities all of his time and his enthusiasm. In order to be free from parish responsibilities he offered to surrender his salary as Rector of St. Stephen's and urged the Vestry to appoint an Associate Rector who might take over that work. This plan was adopted and finally, on February 2,

1864, Dr. William Rudder was installed as Associate Rector. A month later David Wood was elected organist. The minute of the Vestry of that date is prophetic. It reads: "The committee has engaged Mr. David Wood, a blind organist but deemed by all not only to be a musical genius but one of the most accomplished organists who is accustomed to the musical exercises of the Episcopal Church." A few weeks later, on March 30, 1864, Mr. Cleeman was elected a Vestryman. November of that year the Burd Orphan Asylum was solemnly dedicated and in February of 1865, Mr. Edward Shippen resigned as Secretary of the Vestry after fourteen years of service and as Chairman of the Building Committee of the Burd School, which for a period of four years had been his outstanding interest, and in the closing days of December 1865, Dr. Ducachet quietly passed away, his dream realized and his task completed.

The meeting called on December 14th, 1865 at Mr. Shippen's residence, 1207 Walnut street, to take action on the death of Dr. Ducachet marks the close of an era. The venerable Rector had completed over thirty years of service to the Parish. He had assumed his duties as we previously noted in those stormy closing days of the Jackson Administration. He had fitted perfectly into the simpler life of the forties and the fifties. No doubt he cherished many happy recollections of his long rectorate but none happier, I imagine, than the mellow memory of quiet evenings at Ninth and Chestnut streets in the company of his dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Burd, where before a cheerful open fire and after a good dinner he watched

the flames reflected in the changing colors of the rich Madeira. All contemporary records testify to the unique charms of the Rectory on Girard street. Not even the new-fangled busses on Chestnut street could disturb the quiet of that delightful spot. Across the way was the interesting Cleeman family -- the father, a fine looking Baltic German from Riga; the mother, the most refined type of Virginia womanhood -- and the six boisterous young people, no doubt feeling the urge of the larger life before them. To Ludovic he was particularly devoted and when a mere boy called him to the Vestry. I like to linger in the Philadelphia of that period. It too soon passed away in the angry passions of the Civil War, and Dr. Ducachet survived just long enough to look out upon a thoroughly changing world. The old families were leaving Girard street, and Filbert street, and Arch street, and were moving far westward beyond Broad street. People with unfamiliar names had acquired great fortunes during the War and were figuring prominently in the life of the City. Indelicate fashions and rougher manners seemed to prevail among the younger set and some there were who even spoke of St. Stephen's as actually ugly and of the services as singularly dull and uninteresting.

But mark the wisdom and generosity of the man. He knew that this generation was not for him. So he sought and found for his beloved Parish the most vivid personality in the ministry of the Episcopal Church and then retired to the simple duties of the Burd Orphan Asylum and gave Dr. Rudder a free field for his extraordinary talents. It was a great opportunity and

Dr. Rudder completely and perfectly met it. His rectorship was an unbroken worldly triumph. He was indeed a popular, if not a penetrating preacher. His sermons had life and color and I found to my surprise that even after reposing half a century in the damp and dusty atmosphere of the Pennsylvania Historical Society their vitality remained undiminished and their colors unfaded. His success was immediate and the death of his youthful wife in the spring of 1866 added just the needed touch of tragic romance to his personality. He wrote a very touching letter to the vestry which was duly spread upon the minutes. He told them that his life was wrecked and his heart desolate; he was doubtful whether he could ever undertake again the burdens of the Parish -- in short, just such a letter as is the sure promise of a second marriage. And the sympathetic Vestry gave him a six months' leave of absence to travel in Europe. Thus he acquired his lifelong habit of travelling in Europe. But the Vestry and congregation never grudged him the many long vacations for when he returned his sermons were more brilliant, his word pictures even more captivating and his descriptions of men and things more apt. For this colorful personality and brilliant orator the music which Dr. David Wood developed at St. Stephen's was a perfect background. Viewed by every worldly test it was indeed the golden age of St. Stephen's. Receipts from pew rents increased yearly. There were no deadly deficits. The congregations were large and on great occasions massed around the doors clamoring for admission. Easter at St. Stephen's in the early seventies --- what an ecclesiastical triumph in presents!

The fine music which bespoke the touch of a master hand; the vivid, striking, personality of the Rector, the cadence of well rounded periods, the high hats, the silk dresses and the gorgeous bustles, and Mr. Cleeman, the ever-faithful beaming from his pew in the new transept and preparing to count the bountiful Easter Offering. And then the dull Sunday afternoons of the seventies -- no motors with the joyful call of the road, no golf courses with their bewitching foursomes, no evening musicals, and no bridge parties to cash their cheerful shadows backward over the dull hours of an inclement day. And one of the social excitements, can you believe it, was the afternoon service at St. Stephen's Church to hear Dr. Wood's music, and Dr. Rudder's vivid words. There was nothing accidental in Dr. Rudder's success. He perfectly represented the spirit of his generation. We have waited too long to do honor to the younger men who emerged from the welter of our Civil War and the tragedy of Lincoln's death to face the preplexing problems of reconstruction. The young veterans of our Civil War did not plead "after the war psychology" as an excuse for inaction. They gave no ear to a literature of pessimism and disillusion. Phrases such as "back to normalcy" would have been meaningless to them. Vast tasks challenged them and they met the challenge with a fine forward spirit of adventure. They built our railroads, laid deep the foundations of our great industrial enterprises, opened up to cultivation the wheat fields of the West and revealed to an astonished world the mineral riches of our continent. They had no time for searching self analysis, for vain questionings, for morbid dramas. For them there

was no conflict between science and religion. The conflict they knew was between science and the elemental forces of nature with which they grappled. So they tunneled great mountains; drove deep their mine shafts; performed miracles of mechanism and felled wide stretches of forest. It is no wonder that men of such a breed -- men like Thomas A. Scott and George B. Roberts -- venerated Dr. Rudder. His philosophy of life was theirs and he gave to that philosophy the touch of color and the atmosphere which it needed. His personality radiated and inspired vigor, optimism, success.

The end of this golden era came suddenly. In the early morning hours of January 29th, 1880, Dr. Rudder passed away at the Rectory, 1539 Pine street. To the Parish it was a stunning blow. All elements of the community united in tributes of admiration and respect. Even his death was dramatic and his funeral was his last worldly triumph.

Three Rectors in fifty-seven years have gone from amongst us and how different they were, presenting the changing fashions of religious experience. Dr. Montgomery, the delicate and sensitive harbinger of a reviving life and richer fruitfulness in the bare branches of the Colonial Church; Dr. Ducachet, the kindly friend and wise counsellor, whose every instinct protested against the censoriousness and ungenerous standards of a puritanical profession; and Dr. Rudder, an early and most attractive prophet of a religion that placed no small emphasis on prosperity as the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.

I leave the company of these saints triumphant to renew in memory for just a moment our happy association with the saints militant -- our three surviving Rectors.

The men of the seventies, with all their material interests were not wholly deaf to the revolutionary movements of thought which were slowly making their way across the Atlantic and finding lodgment in certain centres of American life. In the opening paragraphs of this summary I referred to young Charles Darwin and his crude collections at Shrewsbury School. How grotesque would it have seemed to Dr. Montgomery in 1823 had he realized that a fourteen year old youth preparing at Shrewsbury for the study of medicine was destined to be one of the most powerful and suggestive intellectual influences of the nineteenth century whose thought waves speeding like the radio waves of today would touch vitally the interests of the Parish which he founded and the religion which he professed. Of shorter wave lengths but of no less intensive effect the striking original minds of John Henry Newman and Georg Wilhelm Frederick Hegel were sending forth messages which were to take fantastic forms in the minds of men. How curiously the bold hypotheses of Darwin and of his more adventurous colleagues Huxley and Tyndall were blending with the ultra-supernaturalism of Newman and the rationalism of Hegel! How vigorously organized Christianity rushed forward to do battle with the alleged scientific certainties of the Darwin School and the destructive forces of the Hegelian dialectics until weary and bewildered it sought temporary comfort in a revival of mediaeval superstition. It was a fortunate choice which at this moment called the Rev. Samuel D. McConnell to the rectorate of St. Steph-

en's as the successor of Dr. Rudder on Movember 26, 1881. He brought to the flourishing Parish a well trained mind acutely sensitive to the conflicting currents of contemporary thought and for fifteen years he made a splendidly heroic effort to restate the Christian experience in terms of modern thought. In a recent volume he tells how the intellectually puzzled flocked to hear him. It is the exact truth and under him a multitude "whom no man can number" renewed their faith in the absolute values of life. The character of the congregation changed noticeably. A tradition of the fashionable days survived and took form on festival occasions but it was rather the earnest seekers after truth - the sceptically minded who composed the congregation of the Sunday afternoon services and watched with admiration a strong masculine if not constructive mind grappling fearlessly with the moral and intellectual problems of his generation. It is easy for us now to say that the effort was premature and the results unsatisfactory. It would be juster if we paused and paid our tribute to the courage of one who dared to make the effort and by so doing continued the best traditions of our Parish, which is intollerant of but one thing - intellectual cowardice. Dr. McConnell's ministry served as a preparation for the more constructive spiritual and intellectual work of Dr. Worcester. Again was St. Stephen's fortunate when in the fall of 1896 Dr. Worcester abandoned the chair of Philosophy at Lehigh and gave eight of the best years of his life to this now historic parish. It is difficult to speak of a former Rector whose presence has added so much to this Centennial Celebration.

Dr. Worcester gave to Philadelphia from the pulpit of St. Stephen's one of the most vital Christian messages of our generation. His knowledge of modern psychology; his penetrating insight into the human mind; his interest and his experiences in the mystery of personality, all combined to give his words an authority and an originality which left a far deeper impression on this community than he can possibly realize. There is not one of his former parishoners privileged to hear his truly great address yesterday morning who was not carried back in memory to the many occasions when he stirred our hearts and roused our wills to grasp more firmly "the things which are more excellent". I hope it will be accounted to me as merit that in company with Mr. Cleeman I travelled to Norfolk and tendered on behalf of St. Stephen's Vestry a call to Dr. Grammer whom we honor tonight as our Rector and our Parish leader. May many years roll by before he becomes the victim of the historian! And yet as his friend and his Warden may I indulge in one or two contemporary comments. Dr. Grammer came to Philadelphia just in time to meet the most acute development in the problem of the "down town church". The gasoline motor had completely justified in performance the promise of its earlier days. The City residence was going rapidly and the suburban movement assumed the aspect of a great countryward crusade. The City was developing into a mere workshop which drove men and women at day end and week end from noise and dirt to the quiet stretches beyond. It was an extremely discouraging project to rescue from this disintegrating process and to conserve for the future

the spirit and the form of this rich heritage. We thank Dr. Grammer tonight that this has been so splendidly accomplished and that St. Stephen's stands today the most vital and the most influential of our "down town churches". And here I must close I have endeavored to catch just a little of the spirit of the generations that have preceded us and not to compose a chronicle of the Parish. But as we try to picture in imagination the years that are gone I feel that we are indeed surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. I would that I could name them all -- the men and women who have unselfishly labored here. Among them are some whose loyalty to this Parish and fidelity to its interests impel us to call their names within these walls once more:

Edward Shippen Burd, William Kirkham and Charles N. Bancker who sustained Dr. Montgomery in the early days and one of whom, William Kirkham, was Warden for thirty four years.

George W. Richards, for over a quarter of a century Secretary of the Vestry and Rector's Warden, and Edward Shippen, devoted friend and fellow worker of Dr. Ducachet. Mrs. Edward Shippen Burd, benefactor and founder of the Burd School. Dr. Lewis Rodman, L. Ramsay Krumbhaar and Thomas Neilson, Wardens during the period of Dr. Rudder's rectorate. James Magee, Vestryman, wise counsellor and benefactor, in whose name and memory his sons and daughters have given with such generosity to the improvement of this property and the up-building of all the activities of our Parish life. Mr. Miller, the faithful assistant of this Parish, whom we all loved and honored. Crawford Arnold, the quiet, efficient Christian and Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, distinguished

scholar and kindly friend. Mr. Keable, who gave to unstintingly of his strength during the days of stress and strain through which we have so recently passed, and J. Hunter Ewing, whose gentle presence seems so near to us tonight.

And may I in conclusion name two comrade and colleagues both of whom for almost half a century gave, one of his great genius, the other of his fidelity to the spiritual riches of our Church, Dr. David Wood and Ludovic C. Cleeman.

May we with reverence and gratitude gather these, their colleagues and those they loved and helped, into our hearts and cherish them as the precious treasures of our Parish history, praying that we may be worthy of the heritage they have given us.